

The Pocahontas Times.

If thou would'st read a lesson that will keep Thy heart from fainting and thy soul from sleep, Go to the woods and hills.—Longfellow.

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CHRISTMAS WEEK.

"Some say that when that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated
The bird of dawn, singeth all night long;
And then they say no spirit dares to stir abroad;
Thou night, are wholesome: no planets strike;
No fairy takes nor witch bath power to charm;
So hallowed and so gracious is the time."
—Shakespeare.

Since the days of Shakespeare the Christmas customs have unfortunately changed for the worse and the Christmas jug has become an institution. On the C. & I. railroad, for instance, some fourteen able bodied men took possession of the smoker, being under the influence of strong drink, and the car went into Elkins locked, and those who could not escape by the windows were gathered to the bosom of the policeman.

All over the country the dockets of the police courts tell the shameful story of overindulgence and the toxic effect of bad liquor. It is probably the only day observed as an institution of Christianity which is thus shamefully abused. We do not hear of the Easter drunk, for instance.

The reason may be looked for in history. Christmas in the Roman Catholic Church was one of the holiest of days, and was observed by elaborate ceremonies. For this reason the Scotch Presbyterians and the dissenting churches of England refused to observe the day as a church day, but did observe it as a holiday, and instead of fasting and prayer would eat and drink. To this day it is a day for feasting. The Protestant churches regarded it as a man made day.

The exact date of the Saviour's birth is not known but scholars agree that it could not be the 25th of December as that comes at the height of the rainy season in Judea and therefore the Shepherds would not have been watching their flocks by night, at that season of the year.

Christmas with its lowering skies and earthly troubles such as duns and demands is a sorry time with most of the grown up people. The bright part is the pleasure children derive from the season. Then the substantial spirit known as Santa Claus, a user of tobacco, and with a bloom on his face indicative of deep potatoes, comes out of the North and down the chimney, and leaves modern toys for the children.

"Papa, if you hear any bells to night you wake me up, won't you?"
"You certainly don't expect Santa Claus to bring you anything, do you?"
"Of course he is."

"But Santa Claus only brings good little girls presents."
"Well, I'm a good girl, ain't I mamma?"

"But how is such a big man as Santa Claus going to come down our chimney?"

"Why, he's such a big man he will know how to do it."
Oh, for a faith that will not shrink!

The writer can remember very distinctly when he arrived at the conclusion that it was not possible for a gentleman weighing some 300 pounds to make an entrance through a six inch stove pipe, and that some other explanation would have to be offered to clear up the mystery. In old English days the holidays lasted twelve days closing January 6th, which was Twelfth Night, from which one of Shakespeare's plays is named.

Dr. R. L. Tector has purchased of Maj. John W. Harris the latter's residence property, on Main street of Lewisburg, price not stated. This will make a very valuable addition to the L. F. I. grounds, which it adjoins. Maj. Harris has gone to Hot Springs, Arkansas, to spend the winter, where he will be joined by his wife after the holidays. We hear that he will build in Lewisburg and hope this may be true, tho it is hardly probable that he will find a suitable lot inside of the corporate limits. We understand that he will deliver possession to Dr. Telford about the first of March.—Greenbrier Independent.

VIRGINIA STATE DEBT.

Appears in a New Form.—Recent Decision Dangerous.

The recent decision of the Supreme Court of Appeals of the United States in the case of the State of South Dakota vs. the State of North Carolina, has caused the holders of the West Virginia certificates of indebtedness to become active again.

In the South Dakota case, some private individuals who held bonds against the State of North Carolina found it impossible to collect them, as the payment had been repudiated; and no suit could be brought by a private individual against a sovereign state.

The bond holders transferred the bonds to the State of South Dakota and for an interest in the recovery amounting to \$37,000, that state sued North Carolina and collected the whole amount. The case was appealed to the highest court in the United States with the result stated.

West Virginia has outstanding drafts drawn on her by Virginia to the amount of fifteen million dollars and if any interest is to be counted the whole amount would be at least fifty millions as of this date.

After the war Virginia found herself saddled with a debt of 45 millions and with one-third of her territory gone. The debt had been created to build internal improvements—canals—roads—bridges. Those were gala days in the Legislature. A member could go down to Richmond and bring a turnpike or a bridge back in his pocket, but the James River Canal took most of it. That canal was to reach the Ohio and make Richmond and Norfolk like Minneapolis and Tyre. But railroads, and mountains and war interfered and the Canal is now but a bad memory. The passenger on the railway trains of the James River Division of the C. & O. can look from his window as the train hurtles along on the old tow path and see the marks of that noble ditch and the ruins of locks and dams. The money came like water and went like wind.

After the war, Virginia was crushed and beaten. In any other case there would not have been any West Virginia. She was bankrupt. The worst war the world ever saw had ravaged every section within her borders. Even in the Valley, one of the richest countries in the world Sheridan had done his best to make it so a crow could not fly over it and find anything to eat.

West Virginia had practically escaped and her dominant class were in the first flush of victory and spurned the offers of the state of Virginia both as to proposed reunion and as to figuring on West Virginia's share of the internal improvement debt.

On January 30, 1867, the legislature of West Virginia, "respectfully but most emphatically" resolved not to even "consider" the proposed reunion. And later refused to meet the debt commissioners appointed by the legislature of Virginia.

The distribution of the money which went into public improvements had long been a sore subject with the people of the Western Waters, and patriotic West Virginians claim to this day that the money had been so expended that the people of the Western Waters had paid in taxes to this fund more than they had ever received in the way of improvements. We have not the slightest doubt that that this would prove to be true upon a strict investigation.

After receiving this treatment the Virginians lost their heads and which forevermore prevented the question from ever being considered by the people of West Virginia.

They arbitrarily issued certificates or drafts on West Virginia to the amount of \$15,000,000. These being dishonored by West Virginia fell into the hands of a New York syndicate at the rate of

something like 5 cents on the \$100. The real creditors having thus lost their investment, it would be intolerable to pay speculators, the profits they would realize if the hasty and misguided action of the State of Virginia were to be ratified.

A few days ago Brown Brothers & Co., of New York, bankers, represented by Holmes Conrad, of Winchester, Va., and Col. R. P. Chew, of Charlestown, W. Va., met the Virginia joint debt commission in Richmond to take up the question of the West Virginia certificates.

The proposition of the New York Holding Committee is understood to be about this: This holding committee to deposit with the State of Virginia its nine millions of certificate holdings with the understanding that if the State of Virginia will enter suit against West Virginia with a view to fixing that State's liability for its share of the old debt contracted by the State of Virginia prior to the partition by which West Virginia became a separate Commonwealth the certificate holders will agree to grant to the State of Virginia immunity from any further liability, whatever the result of the interstate suit. It is the belief of both parties that if the Virginia committee, acting for the State, accept this proposition under the terms alleged to have been agreed upon the holders of the two and a half millions of debt certificates not yet deposited with the holding committee will then deposit, these also with the State. These with the two and a half or three millions held by State in the sinking fund would make up practically all of the \$15,000,000 of Virginia bonds apportioned to the State of West Virginia in the settlement of 1871, known as the funding bill.

The certificate holders look to the State of Virginia for a settlement, and Virginia appointed a commission to look into the matter.

Virginia, it is said, never undertook to be responsible for the fifteen millions fixed as West Virginia's share further than to get a settlement with West Virginia and to account for this one-third of the debt, subject to such settlement.

We do not fear the action of the court on this matter, though it looks very much like a suit would be brought. The danger would be in the way the legislature would undertake the defense of such a suit.

The only way in which safety from this shadow of debt can be assured is for the people of this State to raise such a howl that every statesman in West Virginia would be moved to do all he could to defeat it, and would make no concession or compromise. We have no money to further such a scheme, and if we ever did owe any money the old State has cancelled every obligation by the course she has taken

Notice.

Notice is hereby given that the following fiduciary accounts are before the undersigned for settlement, viz:

T. S. McNeil, Adm'r of N. J. Brown, dec'd.

J. W. Oliver, Adm'r of Ad-dison Nottingham, dec'd.

G. W. Miller, Adm'r of J. W. Miller, dec'd.

John W. Kinnison, Ex'r of John B. Kinnison, dec'd.

Nannie E. Beard, Guardian of Pearl Beard.

Given under my hand this 19th day of December, 1904.

J. H. PATTERSON,
Comm'r of Accounts.

Position Wanted.

By married man, on farm or saw mill, will lease farm by year. Reference furnished. Address,

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Choice pups for sale. Sable with four white marks. Registered and fine drivers. Address,

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THE CORNER OAKS.

Some Historical Reminiscences and Moral Lessons.

Prompted by the Old Twin Oak Corner Trees.

Sabbath afternoon, September 25th, 1904, it was a pleasant privilege to enjoy a fractional part of a "Sabbath day's journey" from Inframonte Cottage, with its humble seclusion, to East Marlinton, where piety and paint were so much in evidence at the time.

Among the objects suggestive of reflection pertinent to that portion of consecrated time referred to were two trees at the base of East Point, remnants of that primordial contiguity of shade that was alike alluring to the aborigines and the pioneers in the 18th century.

To tell the story of those trees would be rehearsing an historic narrative from 1749 to 1904, for which there is neither time or space just now available. But as they mutely but touchingly remind me of an incident that I regard as a turning point in my humble life I will make this way-side note:

In 1845 Elisha Jacobs, the late Wesley Brown (colored man) and a half-grown boy were at work hoeing corn near these trees.

In his frequent visits to Huntersville that boy had become infatuated at seeing so many fine looking young men in nice clothes that seemed to be living on the best the country could afford, seemingly with nothing harder to do than to sit on goods boxes, or on tavern porches, telling amusing stories or playing checkers, fox and geese and backgammon.

They seemed to have plenty of money, nevertheless, which Wesley Brown said they made by "playing seven up" at nights.

Elisha Jacobs had but lately come to Pocahontas from Botetout county. He was an interesting character to the youth mentioned because he could talk so well and tell about the wonderful things he had seen in his younger days while making his living as a professional gambler. The tricks he could play with cards, Wes Brown said nobody about Huntersville had ever heard of. To the boy it looked as if his chance had come to quit dirty work in the fields and cut the gent in Huntersville and possibly other places beside, where there might be goods boxes and tavern porches.

The boy's plans were soon matured for Wesley Brown happened on an old pack of cards some how or other and he was generous enough to put them at the boys disposal to do as he might please with them.

The boy asked Jacobs to teach him his tricks, while the party of corn hoers were taking one of their frequent rests near these trees.

Jacobs took the pack and went through quite a number of what he called his professional tricks, and then assuming a serious cast of countenance, he advised the boy never to learn as much as one card from another, for playing cards he believed was one of the worst things that a boy could do, provided he wanted to make anything of himself and would be worth his raising, or words to that effect.

His manner so impressed the boy and he felt it this was the way a man talked that had followed cards for a business he would give the cards back to Wesley, and now that boy testifies in his old age that nothing makes him feel prouder than the fact, that he only knows the names of a few cards and could not play a game of "seven up" even if his life depended on it. He would feel prouder, however, if he did not know the name of a single card.

The Creator had done a great deal for Elisha Jacobs, in the way of a good mind and a pleasant personal appearance, but in his youth chill penury had repressed his better aspirations and hard times and worse coming were always in evidence until after middle age, when he professed piety, became a humble prayerful toiler, made a little and saved a heap and finally had a plenty for the "rainy day."

While but little is certainly known of his remote ancestry, yet, the glow of his countenance, his name, Elisha Jacobs, and some other peculiarities, were very suggestive of a Portuguese Hebrew origin. That boy thinks of Elisha Jacobs, in his lowly grave on Antioch's Creek, with all the sincerity of his heart, he would wish peace to his ashes, and honor to his memory, for all that he was and is to him.

What a strangely wonderful influence, one person may exert upon another, and how far reaching in consequences, nothing but the final reckoning will show the real estimate to be made.

The rounds that were made that Sabbath afternoon now in question brought me near the sprawling apple tree that marks the spot where the Sewell sycamore tree stood, unless my memory be sadly at fault.

One day, fifty-nine years ago, while I was at work near that tree, a thunder shower came along, much to my pleasure, as more rain meant more rest, which is a great boon to a person that always claimed that he was born tired, one who could be made to work, but never could be made to like it for its own sake well enough to be sorry whenever it should rain.

While the winds, the clouds and the lightning were at their work in the overarching skies quite a number of red ants of medium size were at work on the inside of the tree, and their movements interested me very much.

A foraging party of six or eight had found a dead gallinipper on the ground and were trying to transport it to an opening four or five feet higher up the side of the tree near which I was reclining. All seemed to go well until they came to a crevice that was in their way. Here they hesitated and the "crevice" and upon coming together again there seemed to be a brief consultation, during which there was considerable posturing and working of their movable and hairy horns. Finally one started off post haste for an ant and gone around the crevice and disappeared in the gimlet-like hole farther up. Very soon a large detachment of ants hurried out of the opening and struck a bee line for the foraging party and came to the crevice directly opposite.

The foragers pushed their prey far enough for their helpers to reach it and they pulled it over and proceeded towards the entrance. The party relieved went around the crevice and rejoined the others in due time. It seemed now that there were more than were needed and quite a number went ahead.

Upon reaching the opening it was found not large enough to admit the burden. In a little while the huge gallinipper was dismembered, then the enterprising foragers with pieces of wings, legs and body disappeared, and the presumption is there must have been a good time when they all got home after their successful expedition.

It seemed to me, under the circumstances and with their appliances, the affair could not have been more successfully managed by human beings, though they might be Russian soldiers or Japanese foragers.

Reflections awakened by this incident at the Sewell tree recall the fact that a certain Hebrew word, *Bara*, is used in the Genesis narrative when something was introduced whose existence had not been previously recognized. The first was matter, the next mind and the third spirit.

Now it looks to be plausible that these ants possessed matter and mind in their make-up. One hundred and fifty-four years before the Sunday in question that tree was in the control of a being whose make-up required the third putting forth of creative work, implied by the use of *Bara*, and that was spirit.

Marlin and Sewell's make-up comprised matter, mind and spirit and so it was they could get into trouble about ideal matters. Sewell told Mr. Lewis that their trouble was about "ralagian."

The inference was plain that Mar-

lin had made it too hot for Sewell and so Sewell had to take his "ralagian," away from the reach of Marlin's "religion" and put a deep slough between their "relations" to keep from hurting one another, with fists, teeth and toenails, these being the more convenient implements of coercive uniformity far as they were from the enlightened centers of the Christian civilizations of their times.

So far as we are advised it does not seem to have occurred to these pioneer worthies that since the human make up, essentially requires the elements of matter, mind and spirit, that every human being must have, a religion or a dominant influence shaping the issues of human existence. What over this dominating influence may be that is a man's religion.

All the liberty human beings have in the premises is the permission to select what that dominating influence should be, or in other words the choice of dominating all controlling influences of human life and action.

Let thinkers reason as they may no matter how profoundly or rhetorically, all finally comes to this issue, there are but two religions to select from, the religion of self or the religion of Jesus Christ.

The religion of Christ, is to love God with all the heart, soul, strength and mind, and the neighbor as himself; the religion of self is to love self with all the heart, soul, strength and mind, and self better than the neighbor.

Had these two worthy, historical Marlinton men seen it in this light and preferred the religion of Christ, and done to one another as they would have the other to do, and in honor preferred one another, they could have passed one of the happiest winters their lives in their rude camp in the wildest wilds of their day and generation.

It is mournful to reflect that these worthies did not see it in this way, and so matters became so unpleasant that poor, earnestly religious Sewell took up his "religion" and went off about eight miles to the cave at the source of Sewell run, near Marvin chapel; thence he put as much as forty miles more between his "religion" and Marlin's by going to Sewell Creek in West Greenbrier, where an Indian tomahawk and scalping knife ended his life and all his troubles about his "religion."

This all tends to illustrate in an impressive manner the disturbing and happiness marring tendencies of religious controversy, so called. "Against her foes religion well defends Her sacred truths, but often fears her friends."

If learned, their pride; if weak, their zeal she dreads, And their heart's weakness who have soundest heads.

"But most she fears the controversial pen, The holy strife of disputatious men, Who the blest Gospel's peaceful page explore Only to fight against its precepts more."

—Crabbe.

As I look at matters religious, however, the most impressive scene witnessed that Sabbath afternoon was that of a young mother devoting her little daughter to the special care of the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, who spake as man never spake, as all loving mothers think when he said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

Millions of parental hearts have been lovingly touched as they read of His taking little children in His arms and blessing them, the same arms that were so soon afterward so widely and painfully stretched upon the cross.

"Permit them to approach," he cries, "Nor scorn their humble name; For it was to bless such souls as these The Lord of Angels came."

"We bring them, Lord, with thankful hearts And yield them up to Thee, Joyful that we ourselves are thine, Thine let our offspring be."

W. T. P.

To Our Friends and Customers.

Christmas is past and we take this opportunity to thank you, each and all, for the kind support given us during the holiday season and further to remind you that we are still in the Jewelry business, and soon will enter upon the threshold of another year, and we bespeak your patronage during the same, and assure you we shall use our utmost endeavors to merit your trade.

Hoping you have enjoyed a MERRY CHRISTMAS, we are,

YOURS MOST TRULY,

Greenbrier Jewelry Company.